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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 001652

SIPDIS

STATE FOR P, T, WHA, WHA/CEN, PM, AND INR/IAA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/27/2014

TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [MCAP](#) [PBTS](#) [PINR](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: HONDURAS' DECISION TO TERMINATE FOUR FMS SERVICE

LOA WILL SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE ITS FLEET OF F-5S

REF: 03 TEGUCIGALPA 2380

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Roger D. Pierce;
Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (SBU) On July 22, USMILGP Tegucigalpa received a letter from the Honduran Air Force's (HAF) Department of Logistics requesting that the number of Honduran F-5s under U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) service Letters of Agreement (LOAs) be reduced from ten to only six jets. The request appears to have been generated from the Commanding General of the HAF, Colonel Manuel Enrique Caceres Diaz, in an effort to conserve limited HAF funds. This move effectively reduces Honduras' original fleet of 12 F-5s to six. Note: Although the GOH originally had 12 F-5s, two of these are inoperable (one crashed and one has been used for spare parts). End Note.

¶2. (C) In reftel, Post noted that Honduras' aging fleet of F-5s would likely face further reductions due to a lack of spare parts and other budgetary constraints. Honduras' move to reduce FMS F-5 contracts appears to be an effort to keep its remaining six jets in a state of adequate repair rather than attempt to continue to service the others at a cost of significantly reduced readiness. As it is, Honduran pilots train on their F-5s only one hour a month due to high fuel costs.

¶3. (C) Comment: The Government of Honduras (GOH) has consistently indicated it would not negotiate a reduction in F-5s on a bilateral basis with Nicaragua regarding its excess Man Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) (reftel), and this latest move by the GOH was not necessarily in the spirit of furthering regional arms reductions. However, this unilateral move by Honduras, albeit apparently for budgetary reasons, could be used to encourage Nicaragua to consider deeper cuts in its current MANPAD arsenal. It could also be used as a catalyst for furthering regional arms reductions through established channels such as the Central American Security Commission (SICA) and/or the Armed Forces Conference of Central America (CFAC). End Comment

¶4. (U) Post will transmit via fax the original HAF letter to WHA/CEN.
Pierce